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KWASI KWARTENG

JEREMY HUNT

TRUSS THROWS FM KWARTENG UNDER THE BUS TO SAVE CHAIR

British Prime Minister Liz Truss on Friday sacked her close friend in a bid to stem the economic turmoil following his mini-budget

JEREMY HUNT APPOINTED NEW CHANCELLOR

The appointment of former foreign minister Hunt, who had backed Rishi Sunak to be Britain's Prime Minister, is seen as Truss' attempt to assuage dissidents. She is also expected to do a volte-face on her main plank on corporation tax, by raising the rate from 19% to 25% in April 2023, as tabled by former chancellor Sunak but withdrawn by Kwarteng in his mini-budget

UNDER MOUNTING PRESSURE TO QUIT AS PM

- Truss now faces criticism that she fired Kwarteng for executing her policies in a bid to appease critics and cling on to power
- She will also have to answer the larger question about the propriety of remaining in power after embracing the very policies she opposed while running for prime ministership | PTI

38 days

KWASI KWARTENG'S TENURE AS CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

HC frees Saibaba citing procedure flaw during trial

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court on Friday acquitted former Delhi University professor G N Saibaba and five others accused of having Maoist ties, more than eight years after they were arrested and charged under various sections of the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act) and the Indian Penal Code.

G N Saibaba

The HC held the entire trial null and void for failing to follow procedural safeguards. The sanction to prosecute Saibaba under the UAPA came a year after it was granted in 2014 against the other five accused in the case. In other words, when the trial court took cognisance of the chargesheet against him in 2014, there was no sanction to prosecute Saibaba under the UAPA, the HC pointed out.

"While the war against terror must be waged by the state with unwavering resolve, and every legitimate weapon in the armoury must be deployed in the fight against terror, a civil democratic society can ill afford sacrificing the procedural safeguards legislatively provided, and which is an integral facet of the due process of law, at the altar of perceived peril to national security," the division bench said.

The prosecution then moved the Supreme Court against the acquittal but failed to get an immediate stay on the HC's order.

In March 2017, the trial court had sentenced Saibaba, Mahesh Tirki, Pandu Narote, Hem Mishra, Prashant Rahi and Vijay Tirki to life imprisonment. While Tirki is out on bail, Narote died in jail last year due to swine flu. All others were ordered to be released from the Nagpur Central jail.

The HC limited its observations to the validity of the sanction to prosecute the accused under UAPA. Saibaba's services were terminated by Ram Lal Anand College in 2021.

Lumpy skin disease kills 2,070 cattle in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

EVEN as farmers are trying to come to terms with the destruction caused by heavy rain across the state, they are now facing a new challenge. Lumpy skin disease is spreading fast among cattle which has become a major cause of concern. Over the last few weeks, Karnataka has witnessed the death of 2,070 cattle heads due to the disease, which has spread across 28 districts infecting 46,000 cattle.

What is more worrying is that the cattle infected with the disease are not showing symptoms on the skin like before, but is instead spreading to their lungs and stomach. Karnataka is the third state after Maharashtra and Rajasthan where the disease is spreading fast.

Panic among people

There is a fear spreading among people that drinking milk of infected cows can be harmful. At some places, people have stopped buying milk packets. However, some experts said that, so far, there is no evidence of lumpy skin disease spreading to human beings.

CM Basavaraj Bommai convened a meeting with Animal Husbandry Department officials and also directed the Finance Department to immediately release ₹13 crore for the treatment and vaccination of cattle, besides providing relief to farmers whose cattle have died. The government is currently giving ₹20,000 as compensation to farmers for death of cows and ₹30,000 for oxen. Bommai said a sum of ₹2 crore has already been released as compensation. An additional ₹5 crore will be released towards the treatment of the diseased cattle and ₹8 crore for vaccinating them.

The CM added that the disease has spread to 4,380 villages in 160 taluks in 28 districts. Of the total 45,645 infected cattle, 26,135 have recovered and 2,070 have died. P4

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'No Shivling carbon dating'

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Varanasi district court on Friday rejected a petition filed by four Hindu women seeking carbon dating and a scientific probe of the Shivling-like structure found in the wuzukhana (ablution pond) within the Gyanvapi mosque premises during a court-ordered survey conducted in May.

District Judge Ajay Krishna Vishvesha said the scientific probe could not be permitted as carbon dating and ground penetrating radar could cause damage to the Shivling and would amount to the violation of the Supreme Court order to protect it.

The exercise might also hurt the religious sentiment of the general public, he added.

"It will not be appropriate to direct the Archaeological Survey of India to determine the age, nature of the Shivling," said the judge in his order.

The Anjuman Intezamia Masajid, the management committee of Gyanvapi mosque, had opposed carbon dating or any scientific survey of the structure, calling it a fountain.

JUMBO DESCENT

The world's largest passenger aircraft Airbus A380 touched down at KIA with 231 passengers on board at 3.37pm on Friday | EXPRESS | REPORT: P2

Shailaja faces graft probe over PPE kits

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ TPuram

CELEBRATED former Kerala health minister **K K Shailaja** got into trouble as the state's Lok Ayukta on Friday decided to investigate the corruption charges against her and 12 others in connection with the purchase of personal protective equipment kits and other medical devices during the first Covid wave in 2020.

The probe against Shailaja, a CPM central committee member, comes at a time when there are attempts from within the party to sideline her. It follows the CPM's decision to drop her from the Cabinet even though she garnered global accolades for her brilliant handling of the pandemic and, more recently, the party's move to scuttle the Magsaysay award for Shailaja. The probe could further undermine the former minister's political career and be exploited by her detractors both within and outside the party.

The Lok Ayukta's order is based on the complaint by Congress leader Veena S Nair, who alleged state-owned Medical Services Corporation (MSC) purchased the equipment at exorbitant rates. The anti-corruption ombudsman said, "We are satisfied this complaint has to be admitted and an investigation commenced under Section 9 (3) of Lok Ayukta Act." Former secretary (health) Dr Rajan N Khobragade, former MSC MD Balamurali and ex-MSC GM S R Dilipkumar are the other respondents.

Nair alleged the devices were bought at three times the market price, causing huge loss to the exchequer. She also urged the Lok Ayukta to declare the respondents unfit to hold public office and sought a directive to prosecute Shailaja and others for misappropriation of funds.

Collected 'packets' for ex-Lokayukta's son: Witness

M G CHETAN @ Bengaluru

WITNESSES in the corruption case in Karnataka Lokayukta office, which rocked the state in 2015, have made startling revelations before a court. The staff, who worked in Lokayukta's office and residence, have testified that they used to collect "packets and bags" as per instructions from the accused Ashwin Yarabati alias Ashwin Rao, son of tainted former Lokayukta Justice Y Bhaskar Rao, and Syed Riyaz, who worked as Lokayukta PRO.

The trial in the case is in the stage of collecting evidence. Pramod A P, a CAR head constable who worked in accused PRO Riyaz's office, deposed that Ashwin Rao, another accused V Bhasker alias '420 Bhaskar' and Ashok Kumar visited the Lokayukta office, and the 4, including Riyaz, met in the conference hall, which was under Riyaz's control and called government officials to the office. He also said he was asked to collect money and letters from various persons. He said Riyaz and Nagaraj, who was the PA of the then revenue minister, were very close. P5

EXPRESS READ

Anti-conversion law: First case filed in K'taka

Bengaluru: A 23-year-old man was arrested by the Yeshwanthpur police on Thursday night under the Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, known as the anti-conversion law, for reportedly luring and marrying an 18-year-old girl. This is the first case filed under the new law. P5

N-powered INS Arihant tests ballistic missile

New Delhi: Nuclear-powered INS Arihant on Friday successfully tested a submarine-launched ballistic missile in the Bay of Bengal with "very high accuracy". The defence ministry said all operational and tech parameters have been "validated" | P9

Another Pocso case against Murugha seer

Mysuru: Another complaint under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been filed against Murugha Mutt seer Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru, who is in judicial custody for alleged sexual assault on minor girls. P4

HC: App-based autos can collect 10% more charge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Friday permitted taxi aggregators to offer autorickshaw services by collecting 10 per cent additional charge over and above the fare fixed by the state government, and applicable GST. The court's decision came as there was no consensus arrived at in the meeting held by the state government with the taxi aggregators on the issue of the rate to be charged for autorickshaw services offered by them through their apps.

Justice MGS Kamal passed the order as an interim arrangement while granting 15 days' time as sought by the state government to finalise the tariff as per the Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2020 issued by the Central government in November 2020.

Till then, the state government has been asked not to take any coercive action against aggregators for offering autorickshaw services, he said, while also issuing a notice to the state government on the petitions filed by them.

Further hearing of all three petitions filed by taxi aggregators — ANI Technologies Pvt Ltd, Uber India Systems Pvt Ltd and Roppen Transportation Services — which offer services through Ola, Uber and Rapido Apps, respectively, was adjourned to November 7, 2022, to enable the state to fix tariff.

Advocate General Prabhuling K Navadagi informed the court about no consensus being arrived at in the meeting held on Thursday on the rate to be charged. He sought the court's permission to be granted a maximum of 15 days for the state government to resolve the issue, and asked for allowing 5 or 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent for the autorickshaws to collect as additional charges for the services. P2

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Himachal polls on Nov 12, Guj later

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

HIMACHAL Pradesh will go to polls on November 12 while Gujarat's poll schedule will be declared a few weeks later, the Election Commission of India said on Friday. Counting of votes in Himachal Pradesh will take place on December 8.

While Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar cited the precedent of the last elections to the two states for not making simultaneous announcements, opposition parties alleged deliberate delay in Gujarat's poll schedule to allow the incumbent government to roll out more welfare schemes before the model code of conduct kicks in.

In 2017, Assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat were not announced at the same time but counting took place together on December 18. In states like Himachal Pradesh, weather is a very important factor, especially in the upper reaches of the constituencies where snowing takes place. "The Commission...decided to go by the convention last followed. In any case, with reparations and conduct of elections is a very detailed exercise and it takes into account various, variable factors; consultation with all stakeholders and the factors which are competitive," Kumar said.

EXPRESS INTAKE

CJI recuses from hearing BS Yediyurappa's plea | P4

Swiggy pulled up for boys not speaking in Kannada | P5

Water contamination: 23 take ill in Kalaburagi | P7

Vande Bharat Express to link Chennai, B'luru & Mysuru | P7

SC refuses urgent hearing on plea against firecrackers | P9

State highways get 2 EV charging corridors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a major relief to owners of electric vehicles (EVs), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) has set up two major EV charging stations on two prime highways in the state. The EV Fast Charging Corridors have been established on the Bengaluru-Chennai and Bengaluru-Mysuru-Kodagu highways. This is under phase 2 of BPCL's efforts to set up EV charging stations in South India, following the setting up of a corridor on the Chennai-Trichy-Madurai highway.

BPCL's PS Ravi, Executive Director In-Charge (Retail), said the corridors will ensure that EV owners are able to charge their vehicles during long-distance travel and also cut the time spent on charging.

"Major concerns of four-wheeler EV owners include the duration of one-time charge, availability of charging stations on highways and duration of charging. This is where the EV Fast Charging Corridor concept comes in, wherein travellers can be assured that they can charge their vehicles during their journey without any hassle," he said.

EV 25kW CCS-2 fast charging stations are located at nine fuel pumps run by BPCL.

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